# SPEECH

DELIVERED BY

# Mr. BUNSTER, M.P.,

## ON THE TARIFF.

FRIDAY, MARCH 2nd, 1877.

(From the *Hansard* Report.)

Mr. BUNSTER said he hoped he would not detain the House by such an harangue as the hon. gentleman had just delivered. It appeared to him that the hon. gentleman from North York had not sufficient brains to deliver a speech of his own, and he was obliged therefore to quote from hon. gentlemen who had brains. Coming more to the subject under discussion, he would say that Canadian barley had a very high reputation in the United States of America, and every Canadian felt proud of it. American Brewers coveted Canadian barley in order to make a good article of ale. It would seem as if the Finance Minister begrudged the poor lone widow her cup of tea. When he came to the House there was a free breakfast table, but now, thanks to the present Government, the import tax was five cents a pound on tea and two and half on sugar. He did not think it creditable that the necessaries of life should be taxed in this way, when the luxuries were allowed to go free. This was owing to the fact that workingmen had no voice in making the laws, and the rich men were bound to take care of their own luxuries. The hon. gentleman who had last spoken made a personal allusion to him, and said he was a slavish supporter of the right hon. member for Kingston.

Mr. DYMOND: Not a slavish supporter.

Mr. BUNSTER said the hon. gentleman would protect his own language, if he had any of his own. In coming to this House, his (Mr. Bunster's) determination was to support that party which would build the Canadian Pacific Railway and would make a Union of the Dominion, as they would perceive on reference to Morgan's "Parliamentary Companion." That was the party he wanted to follow, no matter who the leader might be; as long as that leader had the necessary brains to carry out the work, he would follow him. He was not going to support that man who went to England and said that British Columbia was not a fit country for a white man to live in. He utterly scouted such an idea, and claimed that British Columbia had a more genial climate than, and as hospitable a people as, any Province in the Dominion. British Columbia joined the Union for the purpose of securing the Pacific Railway. British Columbia did not expect to build the railroad herself, but thought that Canada, with the assistance of British

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gold, would be able to do so. It was hoped yet that Canada had sufficient honesty and integrity to build the road, and thus carry out her bargain with British Columbia. Whoever wanted to see Canada rise to be a great nation might well look to our neighbours for an example, who carried on the construction of their Pacific Railway during the war, and built it in five years. With reference to the tariff, it must ever be remembered that beer was the national British beverage. He was sorry to see the hon. member for North York throwing ridicule upon his own country's beverage. How did he know but he was suckled on it as an infant?

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD: I suggest that the hon. member has made a mistake. It is generally at the end of life rather than at the beginning that men want their bier.

Mr. BUNSTER said the hon. member for North York had chosen to taunt the right hon. member for Kingston with not affording protection when he was in power; but he (Mr. Bunster) must truly say that he had found much more protection to the industries of this country during the *régime* of the right hon. member than he did now. Very few members of the House understood the American scheme of protection. When an American exported anything upon the importation of which a duty was placed, be it ever so small, he immediately went to the Customs officers and got his drawback. Probably, if British Columbia had known that her industries would have been unprotected, and that the Pacific Railway would not have been built according to agreement, she would not have been so ready to join this grand Confederacy. The sooner their industries were protected, and the railway built, the better. It was not right to allow articles to come in from our neighbours free, while our local manufactures were taxed. The brewer had to pay a tax on malt to the Government, which was twice as much as the price of barley in Ontario; and this, too, when the malt was to supply the national British beverage. Besides the tax on malt, the brewers had to pay a license of $350 a year, and keep up an expensive establishment. The hon. member for North York said that the right hon. member for Kingston would not have spoken about Mr. Scott if he was present; but the hon member for North York would not have spoken of the Hon. William Macdougall if that gentleman were in the House, for he would find him more than a match for him, either in the House or outside of it. He (Mr. Bunster) would ask all hon. gentlemen on the other side not to give the Government a slavish support on this question, but to give an independent vote, and attempt to revive the drooping industries of the country. He was surprised that the Government still refused to aid the crippled industries of the country, but proposed the most extraordinary tariff policy ever thought of. Whether it was intended to include the new malt tax or not he did not know, but he knew that the manufacture of malt, ale and porter was an industry of a very important nature, seeing that the duty on these articles furnished a very considerable proportion of the revenue of this country. The Finance Minister, to his utter astonishment, had said in his Budget Speech that he proposed to put one cent per pound more on malt, making the duty two cents a pound—just double what the farmer got for his barley, thereby injuring the farmer. He questioned if there were one-fourth of the members of this House, outside of the Government, that knew what that announcement meant, or if there was half that number who cared to enquire. He proposed, therefore, to give this House some information as shortly as possible as to what it really did mean. It meant one dollar per barrel additional duty on ale and porter. The present tax was one dollar per barrel, which the present Finance Minister proposed to double; besides which, brewers of an average annually of eight hundred barrels had also to pay a license equal to fifty cents per barrel, viz., $250 for a malt license and $100 for a brewer's license to the Dominion Government for the privilege of manufacturing; and a Provincial license of $150 for selling when made. These exactions when added together made two dollars and a half per barrel on strong

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ale and porter—a tax that exceeded that of any country in the world. The United States, with a debt of two hundred thousand millions of dollars, created by the late war, only levied one dollar per barrel on ale and porter, and England, with her enormous public debt, caused by two hundred years of foreign wars, levied not more than half the tax of Canada, where there had been no war but the Fenian invasion. Another fact that should not be lost sight of was that in England an immense quantity of mild table beer was made out of the same malt after the strong ale was taken out, which assisted to pay the duty. That, however, in this country could not be sold at all. He found, by the Inland Revenue returns for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1876, pages 26 and 27, that there had been a great falling off on malt and malt liquor. For the fiscal year, ending June 3rd, 1875, the malt liquor Excise duties amounted to $29,976.56; and for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1876, to $14,188.28, showing a decrease of $15,788.28. For the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1875, the malt duties amounted to $351,389.82; for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1876, to $327,709.47, showing a decrease of $23,676.35, while on spirits, the receipts had increased by $122,671.96. The deficiency on malt in round numbers was $40,000, and represented four million pounds of malt, or nearly five and a half million pounds of barley. Yet in the face of this, the Finance Minister thought it expedient to hamper this industry still more. It seemed to him a strange policy to increase the tax to such an enormous extent on productions that were languishing, as was plainly shown by the above returns, while spirits, that could bear an additional amount without suffering, were allowed to remain as before. He had noticed that, when they entered a bar-room for a drink, the bar-keeper generally placed down a decanter or bottle of whiskey before them, and said: "Which will you have, rye or proof?" But he had often stopped them by asking for a glass of ale. He mentioned this to show that the bar-keeper knew there were far more profits to him in serving his customers with a glass of whiskey than with a good glass of ale. Even if this was not sufficient to show the unwise policy of such a course, the fact that ale, beer and porter, brewed entirely from malt, were perishable in their nature, so that brewers lost heavily every year by the souring and utter destruction of their manufactures, on which they have paid duty, whilst spirits improved by keeping, and there was no loss entailed by having to hold them over, ought, in the opinion of reasonable people, to induce a more liberal policy in dealing with the article of malt. He again asked every independent member of this House to think of the great injustice he was doing the farmer and a large majority of his constituency, both in town and country, if this tax should become law. It was also strange that every increase was always made by Order in Council, and not by the representatives of the people, as it ought to be. He hoped the proposal would not carry, for, if it did, it would bring ruin on many, to the great disadvantage of this country, and to the injury of the Government for forcing such an obnoxious law on the people of this country.

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